

## [Mrs. Jim Bolton]

[?]

Mrs. C. May Cohea P.W.

Amarillo, Texas

Wordage-2,100

District #16 PANHANDLE PIONEERS

Interview; Mrs. Jim Bolton

Corner Pierce and 7th, Streets

Amarillo, Texas

Mrs. Bolton came overland from Panhandle City to Amarillo as a young girl to visit relatives who had large ranch interests in the vicinity. Returning to her home in Chicago, she paid recurrent visits to Amarillo until she came to make her home here as the wife of Jim Bolton.

Henry Bradley Sanborn, the "Father of Amarillo", was Mrs. Bolton's uncle. His partner in the Frying Pan ranch west of Amarillo, Joseph Glidden, much older than Sanborn, was called familiarly, "Uncle Joseph". Although Glidden was not a blood relative, the Gliddens, Sanborns, and Wheelers were "like one big family".

Mrs. Bolton has among family heirlooms the coat of arms of her family, which goes back to the southern branch of the Wheelers, including the poet and novelist, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, and General Joe Wheeler, the "Fighting Joe Wheeler" of the South during the Civil War,

## Library of Congress

and the coat of arms of the Sanborn family, which can be traced back for hundreds of years. Both coats of arm consist of a suitable motto and the figure of an animal, rampant.

When she first walked down the main street of the small cow town that was Amarillo, everyone looked at her from the pine board porches and shacks that lined the short thoroughfare. The sensation of curious, watching eyes was a strange one to her, accustomed to the busy avenues of Chicago, where the stranger went unnoticed.

As the guest of her uncle, who owned the Amarillo Hotel, Mrs. Bolton had occasion to attend the dances held in the hostelry "parlor", which extended along the north side of the building about the length of two rooms. A white chiffon frock which she wore at one of these entertainments was shredded by the spurs worn by her cowboy partners.

Mrs. Bolton, who was educated in Chicago, Boston, and New York in music, art, and concert work, played at many of the first entertainments of the town for charitable purposes, graciously giving of her time and talent. A big, fine oil lamp was presented to her by a committee from one of the churches in recognition of her services. [???

Coming from a large metropolis, she often found the provincialism of the cow town amusing. Once, after she had given a recital at which four small girls sang "Mammy's Little Alabama Coon", interpolating a few rhythmic swayings of their own, she was visited in her hotel apartment by an elder of the church and its pastor, who informed her that they would pray for her publicly if such "conduct" was continued. More in amusement than anger, she ordered them to leave the room.

Mrs. Bolton, recalls that dancing had to be taught as "physical culture" in those early days. Later, however, the same elder's daughters went away to school and came back and indulged in dancing and other formerly banned frivolities. The elder with his family then occupied a small adobe which stood where the Elks Club is today.

## Library of Congress

Mrs. Bolton, who taught a large class of piano pupils, once gave a recital or musical entertainment with her pupils in a building across the street from the Amarillo Hotel, where the Amarillo building now stands. A shabbily dressed man who was about three sheets in the wind came up during the entertainment and asked where he could find the ticket seller. Mr. Bolton, realizing that the man's condition unfitted him for any company but his own, told him to go around the building until he found the ticket seller. The man went around and around the building before he gave up in disgust and went across to the hotel where he maudlinly told his troubles about the elusive ticket seller.

When a group of local educators organized Amarillo College in about 1899, Mrs. Bolton was asked to teach music in the college. To help them out, she taught in that institution for several years, receiving as "salary" the fees paid by the music students in her classes. Other members of the faculty apportioned among themselves the fees paid by other students of the college.

Other instructors in Amarillo College were J. H. Hamlin, (now Judge Hamlin of Farwell) W. D. Twitchell, Mr. R. B. Briney, local preacher, educated at the University of Indiana, who taught mathematics, and a Mr. Franks, who was somewhat of a ladies' man. Dr. David Fly taught physiology and hygiene.

When Mr. Sanborn platted the townsite of Amarillo, he set aside about 20 acres where the Sanborn Park, the Polk Street Methodist Church, and the W. H. Fuqua residence now are, for a college campus. He made a standing offer to give the land for educational purposes if someone would erect a \$20,000 college plant upon it. Presbyterians of Fort Worth at one time considered establishing a college upon the site. However, it was left to a group of interested local teachers to establish the institution, which flourished for several years. Mr. Sanborn had a long, rambling structure moved upon the grounds for the school building. A year book, giving details of the school, faculty, and curriculum, was printed, with pictures

## Library of Congress

and everything. Several former students in the old Amarillo College still live in Amarillo, Terry Thompson being one of them.

W. D. Twichell, now of San Angelo, established the first institution of higher learning in Amarillo because the older girls and boys were totally without accommodations for such training. Later, as the town grew, many of the older girls attended Kidd-Key College at Sherman.

Mrs. Bolton's piano, the first and only one in Amarillo at the time, made many a trip up and down the stairs of the old opera house to furnish music for various forms of entertainment. The old piano today sits in one of Mrs. Bolton's houses in the 600 Block on Pierce.

Today Mrs. Bolton, whose fine sense of poetry and music perhaps harks back to her remote relative, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, plays upon another and newer piano, but it is doubtful if its lovely tones can ever blot out the memory of its ancient predecessor. Although she would be the first to disparage such a report, Mrs. Bolton gives the benefit of her musical training to aspiring young musicians of Amarillo, coaching them for the career for which she herself was educated.

Mrs. Bolton recalls the neighborly helpfulness of those early years, when women such as Mrs. W. H. Fuqua nursed the sick and lent assistance wherever it was needed. Mrs. Bolton would be the last to tell how she herself did more than her share of visiting the sick, how she still bears a scar from an infection received while she was nursing a cancerous patient, whose small son she kept for years until others could care for him in his own home.

While Mrs. Bolton was visiting in Chicago, she received word that her husband required an operation for appendicitis. Hurrying home, she stayed at Saint Anthony's hospital where the operation was performed for five weeks until he was discharged. When Mr. Bolton came to pay his hospitalization bill, no charge was made for Mrs. Bolton's room and board for all those weeks, the management refusing to make any charges other

## Library of Congress

than the regular hospital fees for any patient, since Mr. Sanborn had given the land upon which St. Anthony's stood. Later, although she and her husband were both Protestants, when Mr. Bolton died, Catholic sisters visited her to tender their condolences. At that time they recalled that she had played at the dedication of St. Anthony's years before, upon a raised platform built for the purpose. Once, during the progress of the ceremony, she had forgotten to pump the organ until nudged by a friendly elbow.

Mrs. Bolton was hostess to perhaps the first house party on the north plains. In about 1897 several young men and women and two or three couples were invited to the Sanborn ranch property west of Amarillo, on what is now the Wilson place. The entertainment was called a "sunset to sunrise" party. The dining table would seat only twenty, so lots were drawn to see who would eat at the "first table". Among those present were Ray Wheatley, Elmer Roach, Banks Jones, Mr. Graham, Mr. and Mrs. Evans, Mrs. Ricks, Dr. and Mrs. David Fly, Katie Williams, Malcolm Jones, and Mr. and Mrs. Bolton.

While she was at the Frying Pan ranch, Mrs. Bolton once saw a headrise in the creek which was fed by Tecovas Springs sweep everything before it.

Mrs. Bolton was one of the original twelve members of the JUG (Just Us Girls) Club, through whose interest and efforts the Potter County Library was established. The first money earned by the club was used to buy 30 books for the purpose of founding a library. Later efforts of members of the club added further donations to the tiny beginning. One entertainment given by the club for the benefit of the library, a dinner dance with a "real" orchestra, netted several hundred dollars.

Among historical relics which Mrs. Bolton purposes to give to the Panhandle-Plains Museum at Canyon in trust until a museum is established at Amarillo for such objects, is a piece of the first barbed wire used in the Frying Pan ranch and a valuable antique clock. Family heirlooms include an Oriental rug 65 years old and a bed more than a hundred

## Library of Congress

years old. The bed, every part of wood, was given to her mother by her great-grandmother when the former moved to Chicago before the great fire in that city.

5

H. B. Sanborn. Mrs. Bolton's uncle, who had a 20-year contract with Joseph Glidden, the man credited with the invention of barbed wire, was the first millionaire in Texas. To his horse ranch near Sherman, Texas, he imported purebred stock, draft horses, running horses, roadsters, riding horses, from France, Belgium, and other European countries. He owned the first Percheron colt in Texas. From the ranch near Sherman Mr. Sanborn sent fine stallions to breed good horses for the Frying Pan ranch. It was he who introduced horse racing at the Dallas Fair.

When Mr. Sanborn learned that one of his employees on the Frying Pan with several other men had bought the townsite of Old Town, he resolved to establish a town in what he considered a better location.

He was at first undecided whether to found a town at Canyon of Cliffside. With several other men and a Mexican who drove the open buckboard which was drawn by four horses, he went to look over the possibilities of the latter site. During the inspection tour he sat down upon the high cliffs with their sand like deep yellow pigment, the clay staining the seat of his trousers. When Mr. Sanborn rose to go, the old Mexican pointed to the yellow imprint and chortled, "Amarillo; amarillo"

"Well, gentlemen," Sanborn seized upon the Spanish word for yellow, "we may not have a town, but we've got the name for it. There is no other town named Amarillo".

Soon the old Amarillo Hotel arose on the new townsite which Sanborn envisioned for his town, about a mile east of Old Town. The new hotel was painted yellow. Many of the residences which soon sprang up in the new location were also painted yellow, which was a durable color adapted to the climatic vagaries of the region.

## Library of Congress

The Sanborn home, which stood upon the block now occupied by the Municipal Auditorium, was painted yellow. Here Sanborn maintained a private park in which were several deer. Here, too, were the first municipal waterworks. The Sanborns planned to build a home on the present site of Sanborn Park. However, Ellen Sanborn later gave the plat to the city for a park to be used by adults.

By giving lots and moving houses of the residents of Old Town to the new location with a team of six or eight oxen, Mr. Sanborn soon populated his townsite.

Glidden, partner in various enterprises with Mr. Sanborn, never lived in Amarillo, merely visiting the town at different times. At the division of their community interests, Sanborn retained 50,000 acres of the Frying Pan ranch and the townsite, Glidden receiving the remaining range acreage and the Amarillo Hotel. The Frying Pan, among the first fenced acreage in the Panhandle, cost the partners around \$33,000 to enclose with barbed wire in 1882.

Later, Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Cannode, who worked for Glidden in his De Kalb Hotel in Illinois, where his family maintained a home on one floor of the hotel, bought the old Amarillo Hotel, paying it out in installments after a large down payment.

The annex to the old Amarillo Hotel, known as the McIntosh Hotel, was moved to the Bowery and was later burned.

Glidden's daughter, Elba, was married to William Bush. Her father several years before his death gave her \$100,000 with which to build a home on Chicago's famous Lake Shore Drive. However, she spent but half of the sum on the home, investing the other half in a business for her husband, who was a glove salesman. His company imported gloves, material for men's hats, and the like. After her death, which occurred while she was still a young woman, her husband remarried a girl 35 years his junior.

## Library of Congress

The old Frying Pan ranch records, destroyed in a fire which consumed the headquarters building would have yielded interesting historical material. Here the first child of Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Wetsel was born. For a number of years Mrs. Wetsel was the only white woman, as she was the first, in Potter County. Mr. Wetsel, sent to the Frying Pan by Mr. Sanborn from the horse ranch near Sherman, went back to Potsdam, New York, for his bride, then a young girl of eighteen.

There are still early residents of Amarillo who can recall Sanborn's tallyho coach, drawn by four speaking horses, with a seat for the hostler, whose duty it was to go to the horses' heads when the coach made a step, behind, one for the driver and footman in front, and seats for 6 or 8 persons on top.

Joseph Glidden always wore a top hat, colloquially called a "stovepipe" hat. One day his hat blew off in a high wind. Sanborn laughingly offered two dollars to anyone who would retrieve his partner's "sombbrero". A cowboy rode after the tumbling headgear, 7 lassoed it, and brought it back intact to its disgruntled owner, collecting and pocketing the reward.

Mrs. Bolton recalls many of the first residents of Amarillo, which has been considered an uncouth cow town, who were cultured men and women, college and university graduates, among whom were John Arnott, educated at Edinburg University to become a barrister; Banks Jones, Texas University scholarship man who spent three years at old Heidelberg University in Germany; Mrs. Higinbotham, who was a Vassar girl; and numerous others who became the first educators in Amarillo and on the north plains.

Among memories of early Amarillo Mrs. Bolton recalls silent moving pictures in the old opera house seen-and more or less enjoyed - for the sum of ten cents.

Stringfellow had the first hardware in Amarillo. W. H. Fuqua, who with his wife was noted for his many deeds of charitableness, ran a livery stable before he established the First National Bank.



## Library of Congress

A negro named Jerry, supposedly still living in Amarillo, was the oldest colored man in town. In those first days people of color were discouraged from letting the sun go down upon them in the new cow town. Mr. Faqua's colored cook had to be protected from such discouraging tactics.

Jack Floyd, first restaurateur in Amarillo, had a cafe on main street with a high board porch. Hot grease thrown through cracks upon the backs of straying hogs, which rooted and enjoyed the refuse from the restaurant under the pine planks, caused the animals' hides and to flesh to slough off. These wandering hogs and / other animals, individually owned milch cows, etc., gave the town a bad odor, literally, if not figuratively.

Very early in the history of the town, cow chips and soft coal gave way to commercial gas as fuel. The gas was manufactured in a plant north of the railroad tracks. Later, when natural gas displaced the artificial type, a large volume of the natural product was turned on and set afire, the column blazing high in the heavens in celebration of the event.

Land which later became the exclusive [Wolflin?] addition to Amarillo was bought for 8 a song the cost totaling perhaps \$1200 to \$2000. Before the [Wolflin?] home could be built in the addition, a lone grave had to be moved. There being no graveyard at the time, early dwellers in the vicinity had buried a dead man on their own property.

Many English, Irish, and Scotch people were at one time or another interested in land and cattle in the Panhandle. Many younger sons came to the plains to grow up into sturdy manhood in the cattle industry. Still others became "remittance men". One of this like was said to be the illegitimate son of the then Prince of Wales.

Milch cows once grazed on the green which is now Ellwood Park. Mr. Sanborn, when he platted the townsite of a newer and better Amarillo, set aside a large acreage for a park and named it for his son, who died in early manhood. For years the plat lay neglected, a pasture for any stray bossy. Sanborn, realizing that nothing had been done toward

## Library of Congress

establishing a park and that the land was lying idle, worthless to anyone under the existing conditions, brought a friendly suit to rouse the city fathers to action. Fearing that the ground might be lost to the city, leading club women of Amarillo interested themselves in the matter. Mrs. Will A. Miller, whose husband was city manager at the time, learning of the proposed legal proceedings, planted two trees at the north entrance to Ellwood, in order that it could be said that something had been done toward making it a park. Later, she planted flowers and shrubs and tended them with her own hands, bedding the plants in winter to keep them from freezing. In the park is a fountain memorial to Mary Tudor, another Amarillo woman noted for her civic efforts and kindly deeds. On the sidewalks of Polk Street are the spots which mark the site of two other drinking fountains dedicated to Mary Tudor.

But nowhere, even in beautiful Ellwood Park, is there a meorial memorial to H. B. Sanborn, the "Father of Amarillo", the fair city that he envisioned on the fairest spot on earth, the Panhandle plains of Texas.